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NSC FOR MICHELLE GAVIN
ADDIS ABABA PASS USAU, AMBASSADOR BATTLE

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SUBJECT: African Union High Level Implementation Panel for Sudan
Brief P-5 Ambassadors

¶1. Summary. Ambassadors and Charges from the P-5 met on January 23 with the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) at the latter's request. AUHIP Chairman Thabo Mbeki presented the panel's proposed action plan for future involvement in Sudan and provided a detailed briefing on what AUHIP hopes to achieve. He staked out a broad AUHIP mandate that extended from the peace process in Darfur to conflict mitigation in the South, from post-referendum issues to the coordination of international action on Sudan. Mbeki said that he had presented his nine-point work plan to both the National Congress Party (NCP) and Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and anticipated their respective responses within the following days. Mbeki made a good case for a wider AUHIP role in Sudan, although the scope of the proposed work plan is extremely ambitious and some timelines seem overly optimistic. He acknowledged that the AU would require a beefed-up presence on the ground in Sudan and elsewhere but did not address either exact numbers or costs. End summary.

¶2. Former South African President Thabo Mbeki, former Burundian President Pierre Buyoya and former Nigerian President Abdulsalami Abubakar briefed P-5 Chiefs of Mission January 23 on The AUHIP's proposed role in Sudan from January 2010 through July 2011. Mbeki, who conducted the briefing for the AU side, stressed the urgency of action to help Sudan overcome its problems during the period ahead. Mbeki handed out copies of the AUHIP work plan and said that he had already sent a short note to special envoys involved in Sudan to report where things stand. He said that the AU was interested in value-added implementation tasks that did not duplicate other initiatives already underway. He noted that AUHIP had not yet met with Joint Chief Mediator (JCM) Djibril Bassole or the Qataris but hoped to do so soon. An anticipated meeting with the respective heads of the UN and AU peacekeeping departments had not come off as scheduled on January 18 because the UN's Alain Le Roy had been unable to break away from the situation in Haiti. Mbeki said he had met with Sir Derek Plumbly, the Chairman of the Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC) and hoped AUHIP would be able to collaborate closely with that body, as there was a need to duplicate the ongoing AEC role in monitoring implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the North and South. Most importantly, Mbeki concluded, he had met with and presented the work plan to both the NCP and SPLM and requested their views on the proposal. He expected their respective specific replies within the next three days, at which time AUHIP would immediately get to work.

¶3. Mbeki next turned to the work plan and discussed the nine proposed areas in which AUHIP hopes to engage, as follow.

0 Helping accelerate the resolution of the conflict in Darfur.

The most expansive point in the plan included assistance to JCM Bassole and Qatar; establishment of a permanent AUHIP presence in Doha; engagement with armed opposition (to convince them to negotiate); engagement with a range of Darfur communities, plus preparing for a major Darfur-Darfur Conference to search for consensus on ways forward, creation of a suitable electoral environment, post-conflict issues, and unmet gaps; prepare and set a date for the DDC; work with UNAMID to improve the security environment with community policing of IDP camps, facilitation of expanded UAMID patrols, etc; and join action by the Government of Sudan, the AU and UNAMID that would support voluntary returns, deal with land ownership claims and provide compensation. Mbeki said that he hoped a political settlement could be brokered in advance of April elections.

0 Implementation of the CPA. AUHIP planned to engage with the AEC and establish close liaison with UNMIS, IGAD and special envoys to assist the NCP and SPLM in resolving outstanding CPA matters. Mbeki was a bit fuzzy on some of the details, such as the use of the disputed 2008 census for the April elections. He noted that the NCP had made a proposal to the SPLM on supplemental SPLM members of the National Assembly but said he was not clear on the details and did not think the SPLM had yet responded.

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0 Facilitation of post-referendum issues. Mbeki said the NCP and SPLM had agreed to a AUHIP role but did not specify what. He observed that both parties had created task forces to define their positions and noted that the AEC could play an expanded role by serving as the secretariat for dealing with these issues.

0 Making unity attractive. AUHIP hoped to convene a National Summit Meeting of Sudanese political parties to achieve a national consensus of the major challenges facing the country. He cited a 2007 agreement on national reconciliations that the NCP and SPLM had adopted but never implemented, and referred to this as a possible starting point.

0 Southern Sudanese consensus. He noted that AUHIP had met with southern parties in Juba the prior month and gotten broad agreement on opening democratic space and providing funding to opposition parties that the elections would pass muster. The work plan called for a summit meeting on these and related issues by the end of February. Mbeki referred to a 2008 decision by a meeting of Southern Sudanese political parties that GOSS President Kiir admitted had not been implemented.

0 Tackling ethnic conflicts in Southern Sudan. AUHIP hoped to engage with the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) on how to foster inter-ethnic reconciliation in the South. Mbeki noted that the ongoing conflicts were nothing new and that reconciliation was needed whether or not Sudan remains united.

0 The April 10 general elections. Mbeki said that AUHIP planned to meet with the National Elections Commission (NEC) on a paper the NEC had sent to the panel in Addis Ababa. All matters relating to free, fair and inclusive elections would be on the table, including disputed legislations and the vote in Darfur.

0 Sudan's neighbors. Mbeki said that AUHIP had its own program to engage with all of Sudan's neighbors as well as the UN and other interested international partners.

0 Coordinated international action. Mbeki said that AUHIP envisaged an international consultative mechanism that would meet regularly in Addis. He said that the UN would be included and noted that under each of the nine work categories there was a point about liaison with special envoys. He said that he wanted the comments of special envoys on the work plan, specifically how they could work together with the AUHIP to help Sudan, and requested that the G-5 ambassadors transmit this document to their envoys. He observed that organization of a Khartoum-based "Friends of Sudan" coordinating group might also be useful. Mbeki said that he would move ahead on these issues only after receiving a green light from the NCP and SPLM.

¶4. Mbeki said that AUHIP realized that in addition to deploying a permanent presence to Doha, it would need to develop a time-line in order to deal with short-fuse priority issues and to beef up the staff of Ambassador Mahmoud Kane's AU Liaison Office in Khartoum. He said that the EU had already said it could assist with this initiative. Mbeki opened a question and answer session in which he said AUHIP would be unable to meet with the special envoys in Addis Ababa on January 31 because of prior commitments. Mbeki strongly agreed that setting up referendum commissions for Southern Sudan and Abyei should take place immediately, and not after an elected government was in place in April - that would be far too late. He responded that AUHIP foresaw a role in setting up a justice mechanism for Darfur but that the GOS had said that first it needed additional engagement with the panel. Mbeki confirmed that AUHIP had thus far met separately with the NCP and SPLM and would do so again in fielding the reaction of the two parties to the work plan. The three-AUHIP members were accompanied by Ambassador Kane, AU staff from Addis Ababa and Khartoum, and renowned Sudan expert Alex

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de Wall, who is assisting the panel.

¶5. (sbu) Comment. The work plan is comprehensive, perhaps too much so. Close collaboration, including pre-agreed task-sharing by stakeholders, will be necessary to realize this very ambitious program. The optimistic time-lines for some initiatives, such as a political agreement in Darfur, will be difficult to realize. We strongly agree that a "Friends of Sudan" working group in Sudan can be helpful in keeping the array of competing/ complementary initiatives to help Sudan remain on track.

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